

The UK box office in 2019

BFI Research and Statistics Unit

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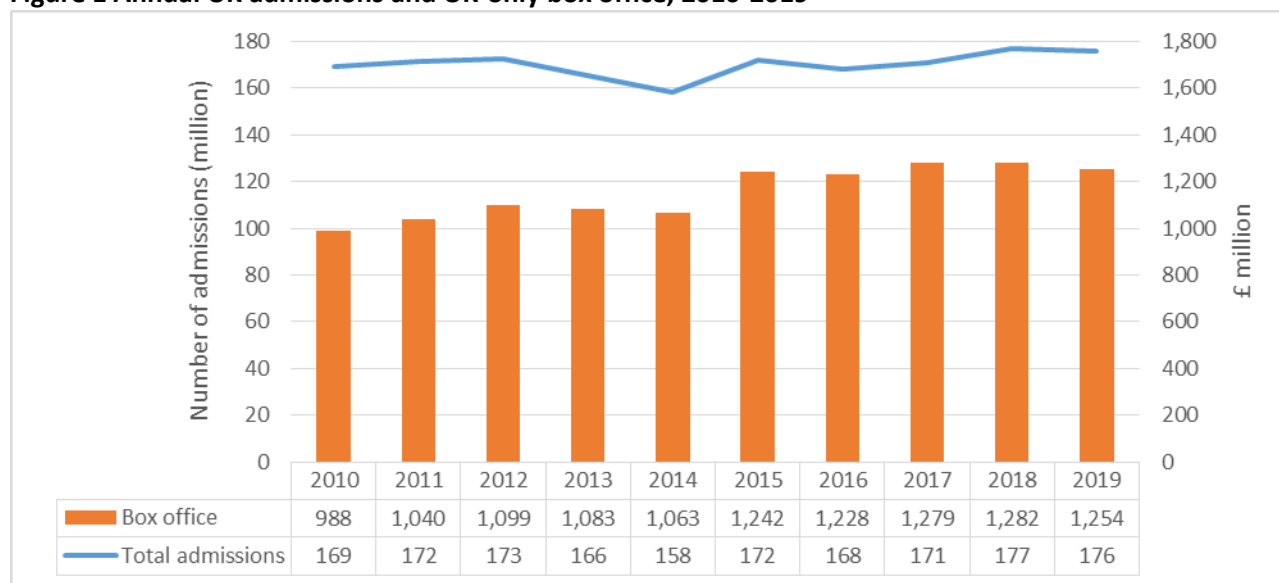
1. Key points

- UK cinema admissions in 2019 were 176 million, the second highest level of admissions since 1970 – a 0.6% drop from 2018.
- The UK box office figure for the calendar year was £1,254 million (2% down on the previous year).
- The highest grossing film released in 2019 was *Avengers: Endgame*, with earnings of almost £89 million followed by *The Lion King* (£76 million) and *Toy Story 4* (£66 million).
- The top 20 films earned £754 million at the box office, accounting for 60% of the total.
- The total box office of the top 20 UK qualifying films earned £514 million, accounting for 87% of the gross box office for all UK qualifying films released in 2019.
- *Downton Abbey* was the highest grossing independent UK film of 2019 with takings of £28 million. This was followed by *The Favourite* (£17 million) and *Yesterday* (£14 million). The Top 20 independent UK films accounted for 87% of the gross box office for all independent UK films.
- The market share of independent UK films was 13% (1.3% points higher than 2018), with the share of US studio-backed and other inward investment UK films at 33%. The market share of all UK films, at 46%, was the highest since records began in 2002.

2. UK cinema admissions

UK cinema admissions in 2019 were 176 million, a slight drop from 177 million last year, but still the second highest since 1970, when admissions were 193 million. Figure 1 shows the level of and change in admissions for the UK-only box office since 2010. Admissions have stayed at around 170 million for most of the decade, only seeing a fall below 166 million in 2014 to 158 million. The gross value of ticket sales in the UK for the calendar year was £1,254 million, again slightly down on 2018 (£1,282 million). The average ticket price in 2019 was £7.12, a drop of 12p from £7.24 in 2018.

Figure 1 Annual UK admissions and UK-only box office, 2010-2019



Source: CAA, comScore

Data for the calendar year and the UK-only

Admissions in 2019 have been particularly variable, month-on-month, compared with 2018. Q1 saw over 37 million admissions into UK cinemas to watch films such as *Captain Marvel*, *Mary Poppins Returns*, and *How to Train Your Dragon: The Hidden World* alongside UK independent successes *The Favourite* and *Stan & Ollie*. However, without the release of key franchise films such as 2018's *Star Wars: The Last Jedi* and *Beauty and the Beast*, this quarter ended over 18% below the previous year.

Q2 saw every month reach a higher level of admissions than in 2018. Franchise blockbusters such as *Avengers: Endgame*, *Aladdin*, and *Toy Story 4* meant that Q2 attracted 17.3% more admissions than the same period in 2018.

Q2 releases such as *The Lion King* and *Toy Story 4* continued to draw audiences into July which, with the addition of films like *Spider-Man: Far From Home*, meant July was 19% up on 2018. Conversely, August 2019 was 19% down on the same month in 2018, which has been buoyed by the continued strong performance of mid/late-July releases like *Mamma Mia: Here We Go Again!*, and *Incredibles 2*. September ended Q3 2019 on a stronger note, being 9% higher than 2018, thanks in large part to the performance of *Downton Abbey*.

The performance of Q4 brings 2019 broadly in line with the overall admissions for 2018. October's admissions were slightly up (2%) on the previous year, but this is almost entirely due to one film. In 2018 four films made over £10 million in October (*A Star is Born*, *Johnny English Reborn*, and *Bohemian Rhapsody*); in 2019 it was just one film: *Joker*, which made close to £50 million. November saw an 18% fall compared to 2018, with only *Frozen 2* making over £10 million, compared to 2018's *Bohemian Rhapsody*, *Fantastic Beasts: The Crimes of Grindelwald* and *The Grinch*. December

reversed this and featured an 18% increase on 2018 thanks to films such as *Star Wars: Rise of Skywalker*, *Frozen 2* and *Jumanji: The Next Level* alongside the continued run of *Last Christmas*. This see-sawing of admissions meant Q4 ended just under 1% stronger than Q4 2018.

Table 1 Monthly cinema admissions 2017-2019

	2017 (million)	2018 (million)	2019 (million)	% change on 2018
January	15.0	16.2	13.7	-15.4
February	16.5	16.1	12.2	-24.2
March	16.2	13.5	11.4	-15.7
April	15.6	15.5	16.0	3.2
May	11.3	13.7	16.6	21.0
June	9.6	10.4	13.9	33.5
July	17.8	15.6	18.6	19.2
August	14.5	19.2	15.6	-18.8
September	10.8	10.1	11.0	8.6
October	12.1	16.1	16.3	1.6
November	14.1	14.9	12.2	-17.8
December	17.2	15.7	18.5	18.1
Total	170.6	177.0	176.0	-0.6

Source: CAA, comScore

3. Top films released in 2019

The following analysis covers films released in the UK and Republic of Ireland in 2019, based on box office data up to and including 24 January 2020. The top 20 is dominated by sequels, franchises and remakes with these films taking up the entirety of the top ten and 17 places overall (Table 2). The top 20 films earned £753 million at the box office, accounting for around 60% of the total box office (compared to £711 million and 55% in 2018). Ten of the top 20 releases had substantial UK production involvement.

Table 2 Top 20 films released in the UK and Republic of Ireland, 2019

	Title	Country of origin	Box office Gross (£m)	Distributor
1	Avengers: Endgame	UK/USA	88.7	Walt Disney
2	The Lion King	UK/USA	76.0	Walt Disney
3	Toy Story 4	USA	66.2	Walt Disney
4	Joker	USA/Can	58.0	Warner Bros
5	Star Wars: The Rise Of Skywalker	UK/USA	54.9	Walt Disney
6	Frozen 2	USA	51.3	Walt Disney
7	Captain Marvel	USA	39.5	Walt Disney
8	Aladdin	UK/USA	37.2	Walt Disney
9	Spider-Man: Far From Home	UK/USA	37.0	Sony
10	Jumanji: The Next Level	USA	31.0	Sony
11	Downton Abbey	UK/USA#	28.2	Universal
12	Dumbo	UK/USA	25.1	Walt Disney
13	Rocketman	UK/USA	23.4	Paramount
14	Once Upon A Time In Hollywood	USA/Chn	21.3	Sony
15	Fast & Furious: Hobbs & Shaw	UK/USA	20.5	Universal
16	How to Train Your Dragon: The Hidden World	USA	19.8	Universal
17	The Secret Life of Pets 2	USA	19.6	Universal
18	It: Chapter Two	USA/Can	18.9	Warner Bros
19	The LEGO Movie 2	Den/Nor/Aus/USA	18.7	Warner Bros
20	Last Christmas	UK/USA	18.0	Universal

Source: comScore

Notes:

Box office gross = cumulative gross revenues up to and including 23 January 2020.

Film made with independent (non-studio) US support or with the independent arm of a US studio.

Data is for UK and the Republic of Ireland. UK and Republic of Ireland are a single "territory" for film distribution purposes.

4. Top UK qualifying films released in 2019

The following analysis covers films released in the UK and Republic of Ireland in 2019, based on box office data up to and including 23 January 2020. The top 20 UK films are dominated by UK/USA productions (16 films) with the top two films the same as the top films of the year: *Avengers: Endgame* and *The Lion King* (Table 3). Whilst earning less revenues than the two earlier features in the Skywalker saga, *Star Wars: The Rise of Skywalker* (£55 million) is in third place. Nine of the top 20 films were independent – either UK collaborations with USA non-studio production companies (*Downton Abbey*, *The Favourite*, *Stan & Ollie*, *Mary*, *Queen of Scots* and *Angel Has Fallen*) or domestic films (*Yesterday*, *Judy*, *Fisherman's Friends* and *Shaun the Sheep Movie: Farmageddon*). The total box office of the top 20 UK qualifying films accounted for 87% of the gross box office for all UK qualifying films released in 2019.

Table 3 Top 20 UK qualifying films released in the UK and Republic of Ireland, 2019

	Title	Country of origin	Box office Gross (£m)	Distributor
1	Avengers: Endgame	UK/USA	88.7	Walt Disney
2	The Lion King	UK/USA	76.0	Walt Disney
3	Star Wars: The Rise Of Skywalker	UK/USA	54.9	Walt Disney
4	Aladdin	UK/USA	37.2	Walt Disney
5	Spider-Man: Far From Home	UK/USA	37.0	Sony
6	Downton Abbey	UK/USA#	28.2	Universal
7	Dumbo	UK/USA	25.1	Walt Disney
8	Rocketman	UK/USA	23.4	Paramount
9	Fast & Furious: Hobbs & Shaw	UK/USA	20.5	Universal
10	Last Christmas	UK/USA	18.0	Universal
11	The Favourite	UK/USA/Ire#	17.0	Fox
12	Maleficent: Mistress Of Evil	UK/USA	14.6	Walt Disney
13	Yesterday	UK	13.8	Universal
14	Cats	UK/USA	11.2	Universal
15	Stan and Ollie	UK/USA#	10.6	eOne Films
16	Mary, Queen of Scots	UK/USA#	9.2	Universal
17	Judy	UK	8.1	Fox
18	Angel Has Fallen	UK/USA#	7.5	Lionsgate
19	Fisherman's Friends	UK	7.4	Entertainment Film Distributors
20	Shaun The Sheep Movie: Farmageddon	UK	7.0	Studiocanal

Source: comScore, BFI RSU analysis

Notes:

Box office gross = cumulative gross up to and including 23 January 2020.

Film made with independent (non-studio) US support or with the independent arm of a US studio.

Data is for UK and the Republic of Ireland. UK and Republic of Ireland are a single "territory" for film distribution purposes.

5. Top independent UK films released in 2019

This analysis covers films released in the UK and Republic of Ireland in 2019, based on box office data up to and including the 23 January 2020. *Downton Abbey*, grossing £28 million, was the highest earning independent UK film of 2019 followed by *The Favourite* (£17 million) and *Yesterday* with £45 million (Table 4). The total box office for the top 20 independent UK films accounted for 87% of the gross box office for all independent UK films released in 2018.

Table 4 Top 20 independent UK films released in the UK and Republic of Ireland, 2019

	Title	Country of origin	Box office Gross (£m)	Distributor
1	Downton Abbey	UK/USA#	28.2	Universal
2	The Favourite	UK/USA/Ire#	17.0	Fox
3	Yesterday	UK	13.8	Universal
4	Stan and Ollie	UK/USA#	10.6	eOne Films
5	Mary, Queen of Scots	UK/USA#	9.2	Universal
6	Judy	UK	8.1	Fox
7	Angel Has Fallen	UK/USA#	7.5	Lionsgate
8	Fisherman's Friends	UK	7.4	Entertainment Film Distributors
9	Shaun The Sheep Movie: Farmageddon	UK	7.0	Studiocanal
10	Fighting with My Family	UK/USA#	5.9	Lionsgate
11	Blue Story	UK	4.5	Paramount
12	The Kid Who Would be King	UK/USA#	3.7	Fox
13	Blinded By The Light	UK/USA#	3.2	eOne Films
14	Wild Rose	UK	2.9	eOne Films
15	Horrible Histories: The Movie - Rotten Romans	UK	2.9	Altitude Film Distribution
16	Peppa Pig: Festival of Fun*	UK	2.8	eOne Films
17	Red Joan	UK	2.8	Lionsgate
18	Colette	UK/USA#	2.5	Lionsgate
19	Official Secrets	UK/USA#	2.4	eOne Films
20	The Aftermath	UK/Ger	2.0	Fox

Source: comScore, BFI RSU analysis

Notes:

Box office gross = cumulative gross up to and including 23 January 2019.

* Cinema releases which are compilations of TV episodes are usually considered 'event' releases and would not feature on this list, but this release is included due to a release pattern more like an independent film than an 'event'

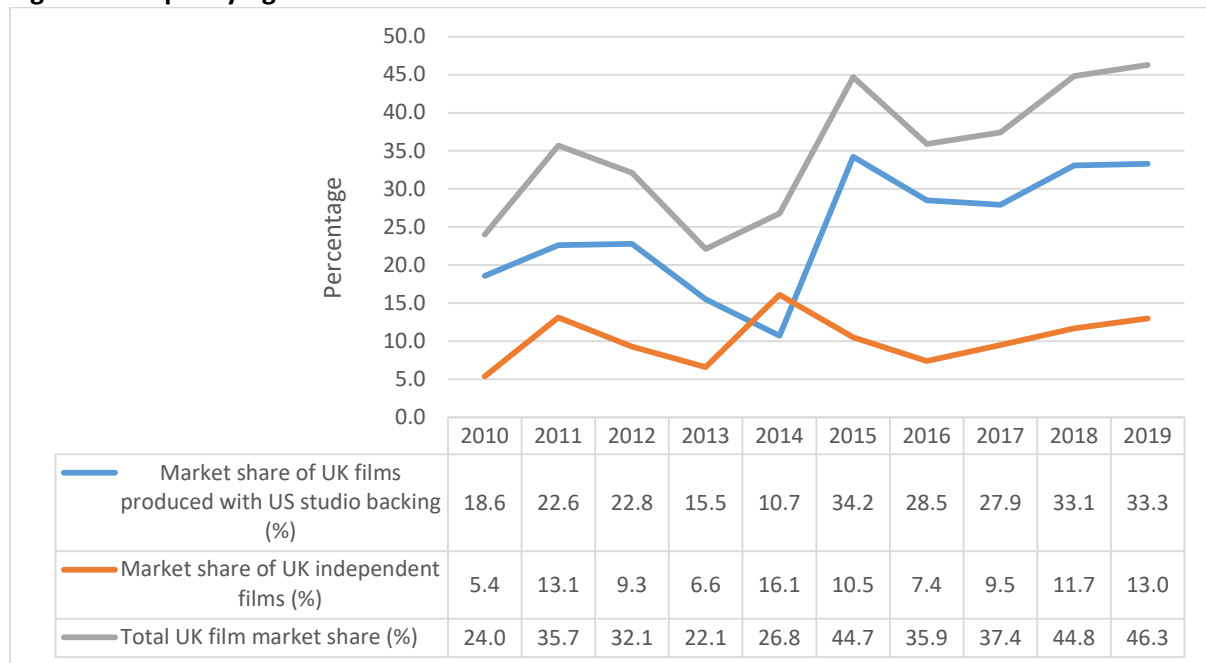
Film made with independent (non-studio) US support or with the independent arm of a US studio.

Data is for UK and the Republic of Ireland. UK and Republic of Ireland are a single "territory" for film distribution purposes.

6. Market share of UK films

The market share of all UK films (46%), was the highest market share since records began (Figure 2). The market share of US studio-backed, UK-made, qualifying titles was 33.3%, a slight increase from 33.1% in 2018. Whilst it was not the strongest year with regards to the market share of independent UK films (2014 with films such as *Paddington* and *The Inbetweeners 2* saw independent UK films take 16% of the box office), 2019 ranked third in the decade. £10 million+ box office successes like *Downton Abbey* and *The Favourite*, alongside smaller budget successes like *Blue Story*, *Blinded by the Light*, *Wild Rose* and *Bait*, gave 2019 the highest UK market share since 2014 with 13%.

Figure 2 UK qualifying films' share of the UK theatrical market 2010-2019



Source: BFI

2019 market share calculation based on grosses up to and including 23 January 2020; market share for previous years based on grosses up to and including the third weekend in February of that given year.

Notes

1. Data

Admissions data supplied by the Cinema Advertising Association/comScore. Box office data supplied by comScore.

The value of the UK box office in 2019 (£1,254 million) refers to the gross value of UK ticket sales in the calendar year. Subsequent analysis of individual titles and market shares includes box office gross in the UK and Republic of Ireland up to and including 23 January 2020 for films released in the calendar year.

2. Definitions

Country of origin is allocated by the BFI Research and Statistics Unit. For the purposes of this analysis, a **UK film** is one which is certified as such by the UK Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport under Schedule 1 of the Films Act 1985, via the Cultural Test, under one of the UK's official co-production agreements or the European Convention on Cinematographic Coproduction; a film which has not applied for certification but which is obviously British on the basis of its content, producers, finance and talent; or (in the case of a re-release) a film which met the official definition of a British film prevailing at the time it was made or was generally considered to be British at that time. Most UK films in the analysis (including the major UK/USA films) fall into the first group – films officially certified as British.

An **independent film** is produced without creative or financial input from the major US studio companies. These are Fox Entertainment Group, NBC Universal, Paramount Motion Pictures Group, Sony Pictures Entertainment, Walt Disney Motion Pictures Group and Warner Bros Entertainment.

3. Feedback

We welcome feedback from users of our statistics releases to help us improve what we do. If you have any feedback on these statistics, or if you wish to make a complaint, in the first instance please contact us using the named contact details shown below.

4. Statistical contact details

This release was prepared by John Sandow, Research and Statistics Unit, BFI, rsu@bfi.org.uk

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